

The medytacyons  
of saynt Bernarde.



**H**ill profytable ben to vs traualyng pple  
gryms & freple synners the fructfull wer  
kes & treatyses of holy fathers the whiche  
the call vs fro þ waye of deranes of synne  
to the way of ryghtwysnes / and teche vs  
the streight waye to þ ende of our pplygry  
mage the euerlastyng blisse of heuen. Wherfore amonge  
those sayd werkes & treatyses / I haue to the honour of god  
and profyte of his people / chose to translate out of laryn  
into englyshe a swete and deuoute treatyse / moche pro  
fytable bothe to the louers of this troublous / shorte and  
vnsure lyfe. And also to the louers of þ euerlastyng blisse  
fulfull lyfe in the kyngdome of heuen / called the medytat  
cyons of saynt Bernarde. Wherof I forbode to vniuerne  
presumptuous correctyon / and mekely submytte me &  
my werke to charytable correctyon. Beseechyng the res  
ders to bouchesafe to praye for me / and the enpynter of  
wypter hereof to do theyr deuoyze dyligently. And by  
cause I wolde haue so good and so profytable a thyng  
comyn to many / and also bycause that hastily after the  
translacyon hereof before it was dewly correcte and or  
dyed / it was by deuoute persones transsumpte & copped  
I wote not how ofte agaynst my wyll. Therfore haue I  
now the petye of our lord Iesu Chryst. 99. CCCC. lxxxv.  
and the .xiiij. days of the moneth of September / for to as  
uoyde and eschewe the Jeopardye and hurte that myght  
come by that that was not dewly corrected / put it more  
dyligently corrected and ordred to the enpynter / in let  
tyng & destrucyon of all other copped after the foresayd  
vncorrected translacyon. And I counseyle and exhozte all  
that haue those same / to leue them as doubtfull and Ico

perdous / and take this more dyligently ordred and cor-  
rected. It is not harde to knowe the one fro the other /  
for they dyfferre bothe in nombre of chapptres and in ru-  
bysses of the same. The uncorrected was dyuided in  
to. cxx. chapptres / wherof the fyrst had no special ru-  
bysses. The seconde chapptre of the same began thus  
Our mynde sothly is the ymage of god / or elles thus.  
The mynde sothly is y ymage of god. And his rubrysse  
was this. That the mynde of god is called the ymage  
of god. But this that is corrected more dyligently is dy-  
uided and parted in to. xcviij. chapptres only / wherof  
the rubrysses folowe here in ordre.

### **¶ The chapptres of this present boke.**

**¶** How man by knowlege and vnderstandynge of hym  
selte may knowe god. And how the soule of man is the  
ymage of god. Capitulo primo.

**¶** Of the wretchednes of the body / and of the dreadfull  
Judgement. Capitulo. ij.

**¶** How a synfull soule is vexed and troubled after her  
departynge fro the body. Capitulo. iij.

**¶** Of the dignite and noblesse of mannes soule. Of the  
wretchednes of the body. And how wretched the soule  
is made by the body. Capitulo. iiij.

**¶** Of the mysery and wretchednes of man in his con-  
cepyng / his byrthe / his lyfe / and his deth. Of the no-  
blesse of the soule. And of the sodayne myschefe of wry-  
ked men. Capitulo. v.

**C**Of the dethe/and also of the paynes of wycked men  
after theyr deth. Capitulo. bi.

**C**Of the rewarde of blessed soules. And of the Joyes of  
heuen. Ca. vii.

**C**Who is able to haue the Joyes of heuen. Ca. viii.

**C**Of charitable loue of thy neighbour. Ca. ix.

**C**How we shoulde praye/ loue & worshyp god/ and thynke  
on hym. Ca. x.

**C**Of mannes herte/ and of prospete in redynge holy  
thynges. Ca. xi.

**C**Of wauerynge and vnstablenes of the mynde and  
thoughtes. Ca. xii.

**C**The cause and also the remedy of wauerynge of the  
mynde. And of confessyon. Ca. xiii.

**C**Accusynge by confessyon of dyuerse synnes. Ca. xiiii.

**C**Of thre ghostly enemyes/ the fleshe/ the wyllde/ and  
the deuyll. And also of theyr temptacyons and resystence  
agaynst them. Ca. xv.

**C**Of the malice of the deuyll/ & how he tempteth man  
by the fleshe. Ca. xvi.

**C**Of the blyss of heuen. Ca. xvii.

**C**Of dyspyllenge of worldly thynges. Of the olde man  
And of the pyte/ gentylnes and mercy of almyghty god.  
Capitulo. xviii.

**C**Thus endeth the chapytres of this pre-  
sent booke/ called the incoytacyons of  
saynt Bernarde.

How man by knowlege and vnderstandynge of hym  
seife may knowe god. And how the soule of man is the  
ymage of god. Capitulo primo.



And there be that knowe & vnderstande  
many other thynges / & yet they knowe  
not theyr owne seife. They take moche  
hede to other / but they loke not well to  
themselve. They leue theyr inwarde and  
ghostly thynges / and seke god amonge  
outwarde thynges / the whiche is within them. Ther-  
fore I shall turne fro those thynges that ben outwarde  
to inwarde thynges / & fro inwarde thynges I shall lyfte  
my mynde to thynges aboue / that I may knowe wher-  
of I came / and whether I go / what I am / and wherof  
I am. And so by knowlege of my seife I may ascende &  
come to the knowlege of god. For the more I profite in  
knowlege of my seife / the more nigh I drawe to þ know-  
lege of god. On the inwarde mannes behalfe I fynde  
thre thynges in my soule / wherby I remembre / beholde  
and desyre my lord god / the whiche ben / the mynde / the  
vnderstandynge / & wyll or loue. By the mynde I remem-  
bre hym. By the vnderstandynge I beholde hym ghost-  
ly. And by wyll or loue / I loue & desyre hym. Whan I re-  
membere god I fynde hym in my mynde / and fele therein  
in hym sweetenes & pleasure of hym / lyke as he vouch-  
safe to gyue me. By þ vnderstandynge I beholde in hym  
what he is in hym seife / what in holy aungels / and what  
in his blyssed sayntes / what in his creatures / & what in  
mankynde. In hymseife he is incomprehenible / for he  
is bothe begynnynge & ende / begynnynge without begyn-  
nyng / & ende without ende. By my seife I vnderstande

how he is comprehensible / when I may not attayne to  
vnderstandynge & knowlege of my selfe tohome he hath  
made. In holy aungels he is pleasaunt and desyrable / for  
theyr desyre is alwaye to beholde hym. In sayntes he is  
delectable / for they happy & blyssed deylte them in hym  
continually. In creatures he is meruapulous / for by his  
myght & power he createth all thynges / the whiche he  
gouerneth moost wysely / & dyscreybuteth moost benygne  
ly. In mankynde he is ampyable & louely / for he is theyr  
god / & they ben his people / and he dwelleth with them  
as in his owne temple / and they ben the temple of hym /  
who somcuer hath mynde and thynketh on hym / vnder  
standeth hym / and loueth hym / he is with hym. Sothly  
we owe to loue hym moche / for he hath loued vs soo  
moche / & made vs after his owne ymage & lykenes / & so  
hath he done to none erthly creature. Sothly it behoueth  
that that thyng that is made after an ymage to be accordyng  
ynge & lyke to the ymage or sympletyude that it is four  
med after / and not to haue vnworthily the name of an  
ymage in vayne. Therefore let vs shewe in vs the ymage  
of hym in despyng of peas and regardynge of trouthe.  
Let vs holde and kepe hym by peryte loue and charyte  
in our mynde. Let vs bere hym in our consyence / and to  
hym present in euery place let vs do due reuerence and  
wo:shyp. Our soule sothly is the ymage of god / for as  
moche as it is apte and mete to take and receyue hym &  
may be partner of hym. It is the ymage of hym / not  
onely that it remembreth it selfe vnderstandeth or loueth  
it selfe / but bycause it may remembre / vnderstande / and  
loue hym whiche made it. And when it so dooth / than it  
is wys. For sothly there is no thyng more lyke to the  
hygh wysdome of almyghty god / than is a reasonable

soule/ whiche by mynde/ vnderstandynge & loue resteth  
in the blessed Trinite/ in whiche she may not rest and a-  
byde/ but yf she remembre hym/ vnderstande & also loue  
hym. But yf she thynke dyligently on her lord god/ af-  
ter thymage of whome she is created and made/ and vnder-  
stande/ loue/ honour and worshyp hym/ with whome  
she may eternally abyde and rest in perfyte Joye & blyss  
Sothly that soule is ryght happy and blessed in whome  
our lord syndeth restinge/ and in whose tabernacle he  
dwelleth and resteth. That is a happy soule that may  
saye/ my lord and maker hath rested in my tabernacle.  
Sothly he shall not deny to such a soule þe euertlastynge  
rest of heuen. O why than loke we not in our selfe/ but  
seke our lord amonge ourwarde thynges/ the whiche is  
with vs/ yf we wyll be with hym. Sothly he is bothe in  
vs & with vs/ but that as yet is by fayth/ vnto suche tyme  
as we may deserue to se hym clerly. We knowe (sayth  
the apostle) that by fayth Christ abydeth in our herres.  
By fayth I remembre my maker/ I worshyp my mer-  
cyfull redemer/ and abyde my saupour/ I beleue that he  
lyueth in all creatures/ that he dwelleth within me. And  
also I trust to knowe hym in hymselfe/ the whiche is mo-  
che moze blyssfull and Joyfull than all these ben. For soth-  
ly to knowe perfyty the father/ the sone/ & the holy ghost  
is euertlastynge lyfe/ perfyte blyss/ and excedynge plea-  
sure. For the mortall eye hath not seen/ ne eere herde/ ne  
mannes herte vnderstande clerly and perfyty how mo-  
che clerenes/ how moche Joye/ how moche sweetenes we  
shall haue in that blessed lyght/ whan we shall beholde  
face to face hym that is the lyght of all bryght thynges/  
the refuge & rest of trauaylers & labourers/ the receyuer  
and keeper of them that turne to hym/ the very lyfe to all

that lyue / and the crowne of them that overcome they  
ghostly enemyes. Thus I fynde in my soule the ymage  
of the hygh and glorious Trinite / to the whiche moost  
hygh and glorious Trinite I owe to referre & orde all  
my lyfe / that I may remembre hym & put my pleasure  
and cōtemplacyon in hym. The soule is the ymage of al  
myghty god / the whiche conteyneth thre thynges / the  
mynde / the vnderstandyng / and wyll. To the mynde we  
attrybute & put all thyngs þat we lerne or knowe / though  
we thynke not alwaye thereon. To þat vnderstandyng we  
attrybute all that we knowe is true / the whiche also we  
cōmende and put to our mynde. By the mynde we ben re  
sembled and lyke to the father / by vnderstandyng to the  
son / and by wyll or loue to the holy ghost / for there is no  
thyng in vs more lyke to the holy ghost than is the wyll  
or true loue. for true loue is the gyfte of god / and it is so  
p. ruous that there is noo gyfte of god more noble and  
excellent than it is. for true loue that cometh of god / and  
is god hymselfe / is properly called the holy ghost / by  
whome the loue of god is diffused and sp. adde in our bers  
tes / and by whome all the holy and blyssed Trinite dwel  
leth and abydeth in vs.

**O**f the wretchednes of the body / and of the  
dedefull iudgement. Capitule. ii.

**O**f the outwarde mannes behalfe I am comen of  
my fathers / the whiche haue made me the chyld  
of dampnacyn before they haue made me the chyld of  
natiuite. Synners in theyr synne haue begoten a synner  
whome they haue nouryshed of theyr synne. Wretches  
haue brought forth a wretche in to wretchednes of this

worlde. I haue not of them but wretchednes and synne  
and this corruptible & rotteing body that I carry aboute  
And sochly I haste towarde them the whiche by bodily  
deeth be passed out of this worlde. Whan I beholde theyr  
sepulchres & graues I fynde not els in them but powder  
wormes / tenche and lothsomnes. Suche as I am now  
they were but lately / & suche as they be I shall be haster-  
ly. What am I. A man made of lothsom and fylthy ma-  
ter turned in to fleshe / wepyng and waylyng put in to  
exple of this worlde. And loo now I dye full of wretched-  
nes / abhominacyon and fylth / and hastily I shall be pre-  
sented befoze the streytc iudge to gyue a counte and reken-  
nyng of my werkes. Woo shall be to me wretchede whan  
the daye of dyedfull iudgement shall come / & the booke  
shall be opened wherein all my purposes / desyres / and  
thoughtes shall be reherced in the presence of almyghty  
god. Than shall I stande quakyng and tremblyng in  
the iudgement befoze our lord / callyng downe my heed  
as gretyr abashed in my conscience whan I remembre  
myn vnkynndnes & trespasses / and whan it shall be sayd  
of me / beholde this man and his werkes. Than shall I  
haue in mynde all my duties and synnes. For by the pro-  
uidence & vertus of almyghty god it shall be so ordeyned  
that euery mannes good dedes and euill shall be redu-  
ced & called agayne to his mynde / & they shall be shewed  
with a meruayllous swiftnes / that his knowlege may  
accuse & excule his conscience. And thus shal euery man  
be iudged / for euery man shall be iudged of his dedes / &  
euery mannes secretes and pryncples shall be shewed to  
euery man / suche as we wyll not for shame confesse / shall  
be shewed to all men. And all that euer we colour here by  
dissimulacyon / shall be brenned there with y<sup>e</sup> vengrable

flambe of fyre. for the cruell & wood fyre shall be let lose & repgne at lyberte. And þ longer that our mercyfull lord abydeth vs / & of his grete gentynes gyuerh vs space to amende our lyfe / the more strayter shall he punyshe vs by ryght wysnes / yf we wyll not amende / wherefore loue we than so moche & coueyte the lyfe of this woylde / in the whiche lyfe the lenger we contynue and abyde / the more euill we do & spnde. And the lenger that we lyue / þ more blame we deserue. for euill thynges & shrewdnes increase and growe dayly / & good thynges ben withdrawen. Than is in contynuall varyacion & chaunge / now in prosperite / now in aduersite / & wote not whan by deth he shall be put therfro. for lyke as a sterre with byghe beimes moueth swyfly / & sodenly manyfeth awaye / & as a spercle of fyre is quenched & turned to ashes / so doth this bodyly lyfe / as we may well se yf we take hede. for whan a man lyueth mercyly in this woylde / & trusteth so longe to endure / dyspolet & ordereth many thynges to be done in processe of longe tyme / sodenly he is rauysched with deth / & vnware without prouysyon he is taken fro the body.

**H**ow a synfull soule is bered and troubled after  
her departynge fro the body. Ca. iij.

**W**han the soule with grete fere & moche sorowe is departed fro the body / aungels come to take her & to present her tofore the ferefull Judge. And than she remembrynge her euill & wycked werkes the whiche she dyd by nyght or daye trembleth / quakeh & loketh how she myght escape or flee / and desyeth trewe sayenge. O geue me space though it be but an houre. Than shal the werkes as in maner of spekyng saye. Thou hast wrought

by we ben thy werkes / we shall not lese not / but abyde  
styl with the & go with the to the iudgement. And they  
shall accuse her of many synnes & trespasses / & shall fynde  
many fals wytnes agaynst her / all though true wytnes  
were suffycient to her dampnacyon. The euyl fendes  
with ferefull loke and terryble cositenaunce shall fere her  
and pursue her with grete cruelte and woodnes / & shall  
catche her with grete dyede & fere and holde her styl / if  
she be not deliuered from them by the helpe & secour of  
our lord. Than the soule beholdynge þe open the mouth  
and other bodily wyttes closed and shette / by whom she  
was wont to passe forth to take her sportes and pleasure  
in worldly thynges / shall returne to her selfe. And whan  
she seeth herselfe alone lefte naked without body / smyt-  
ten with grete fere and dyede / she shall saye in herselfe by  
despayre. And bycause she foloweth lefte the loue of god  
for the loue of the worlde and flesshely pleasure / she shall  
be forsaken of our lord lyke a wretche in that tyme of so  
grete neede of helpe. And shall be deliuered to the deuyls  
to be punysshed and turmented cruelly for her mysdedes  
¶ On this wyse is the soule of a synner not knowynge  
the daye ne the houre of his passynge / rauysht with  
deth / and spared and departed fro the body / and trem-  
blynge and quakynge she passeth of her Journey full of  
sorrowe and wretchednes. And haupnge none excuse to  
alledge and shewe for her synnes / she trembleth for fere  
and dyede to appere before almyghty god / she is smyt-  
ten with grete and wonderfull fere / and vexed with ma-  
ny troublous thoughtes / whan at her departynge fro  
the body (all other thynges set asyde) she considereth  
onely her selfe / and hym to whome the tyme draweth  
nigh that she must gyue accomptes and a rekenynge.

And knoweth that he may neuer be decayed ne changed  
from ryghtwysnes / she consydereth well how strypte a  
iudge shall lye on her / & what reasons she shall alledge &  
put for her discharge in coutryng of her lyfe at so strypte  
a iudgement / and of so precyous iustyce. And though it  
be so that she remembre no thyng / ne synne in her selfe  
ony offence wherof she sholde be aserde and dredfull. Yet  
whan she shall come before that strypte Judge she feareth  
there be somwhat that is not in her remembraunce. Her  
fere & drede encreaseth and waxeth the more / whan she  
thynketh that she coude not escape that tyme of this lyfe  
without synne. And also suche werkes as she thynketh  
to be good & commendable that she hath done in her lyfe / yet  
they be not all faultles yf they sholde be stryptly iudged /  
pyte & mercy set asyde / who can consydre & call to mynde  
how many euill werkes we do by procelle of lytell tyme.  
And what good thynges we by our negligenge leue vn-  
done. Sothly lyke as it is synne and trespass to do euill /  
so it is a myse and default to leue good thynges vndone  
And so it is grece hurte & peryll to vs whan we neyther  
do well ne thynke well. But suffre our mynde to be occu-  
pyed aboute trifles and thynges that ben vayne and  
vnp:ofitable. Sothly it is full harde to kepe our mynde  
surely from euill thoughts / it is also very harde to be  
moche occupied in worldly thynges without synne. And  
therefore there can no man iudge & rebuke hymselfe per-  
fytly. For he is so moche occupied and troubled with so  
many thoughts that he in a maner knoweth not hym-  
selfe / so that he knoweth not well what he doth or suff-  
ereth. Wherfore he is saynten with sodayne fere & drede  
in his conference at his passage out of this worlde. For  
though he fynde no thyng to his knowlege that greueth

his conscience / yet he breedeth suche thynges as he knoweth not / ne hath in his remembraunce.

**O**f the dignite and noblesse of mannes soule. Of the wretchednes of the body. And how wretched the soule is made by the body. Capitulum. lviij.

**O** Thou soule of man adorned with thy image of god made fayre and beauteous with his symplectude / spoused and wedded to hym by fayth / endoured with his holy spiryte / redeemed with his precious blode / deputed and put to be kepte with his blyssed aungels / partener of his Joye and blyss / the enherytour of his goodnes / endued with reason and vnderstandynge. What pleasure hast thou to be so conuersaunt with the vile body / wherby thou sufferest so moche greuaunce / tribulacion & payne. By the body thou art punysshed for the synnes of other / and thou arte brought to nought & reputed a thyng in vayne & of lytell valure. That carcas that thou louest & cheryshest so moche / & with whome thou arte so conuersaunt is foule and lothsom mater turned in to filthe / couered with freyle & vnstyre beaute / and hastely shall be synhynge & rotten carcon and mete to wormes. For though man exalte and magnyfy hymselfe neuer so moche / yet he abydeth still a foule and vnclene carcas. Certaynly yf thou consider well what fylth auoydeth by thy mouth / thy nose & other partes of thy body / thou shalt neuer a fouler dunghyll. yf thou wryte nombre and coūte all his wretchednes / how greuouly it is oppressed with þe heuy burden of synne / boūde and fetted with byces / moued & sterred with concupyscence / trauayled and troubled with dyuers passyons & affeccyons / defouled with illulyons /

euery prync 3 redy to rypill and hasty to euery bytce / thou  
shalte fynde it full of shame and confusyon. Through the  
fleshe man is made lyke to vanyte / for through it he is in-  
fette with the bytce of concupyscence and vylefull de syre /  
wherby he is kepte as thral in bondage / 3 made so cro-  
ked that he loueth vanyte / and wretcheth wretchednes.

**O**f the mylery and wretchednes of man in his  
concepyunge / his byrth / his lyfe / and his deth. Of  
the noblesse of the soule. And of the sodayne mys-  
chefe of wretched men. Capitulo. v.

**T**ake hede what thou were before thy natiui-  
te / what thou art fro thy begynnyng vnto thyne  
endynge. And what thou shalt be after this lyfe. O man  
fyrst fylth 3 lothsom mater / afterwarde a synkyng sacke  
full of dungue / 3 at the last mete to wormes to gnaw on  
in the grounde. How sholdst thou be proude. Soberly thou  
were fyrst as nought / than thou made 3 brought forth  
of vyle and fylthy mater / wrapped in vncleane clothyng  
3 garmentes in thy mothers wombe / where thou were  
fedde 3 nourysshed with a foule lothsom mater. And thy  
cote was not very honest ne pleasaur. Thus cladde and  
nourysshed came thou to vs / and yet þ hast not in mynde  
how vyle and wretched thy begynnyng was. For beaute  
fauour of people / yowth / and ryches make the that thou  
knowest not what man is / the whiche is not els but foule  
and synkyng mater / a sacke of dungue / 3 fynally wor-  
mes mete. Wherof than is man proude that is cocepyed  
in synne / 3 brought forth with payne / lpyunge in moche  
labour 3 vncaryon / 3 fynally must nedes dye. Thus is  
man turned in to vermy / stench 3 abomynacyon. And

every man is turned in to no man. Wherfore than arte  
thou proude man cōsiderunge that thou were sometime  
byle and foule seide and blode coagulate in thy mothers  
wombe. Afterwarde brought forth / icorarded and put  
to wretchednes of this lyfe & to synne / and synally shall  
become wormes & mete to wormes in thy graue. O thou  
dust and pouder / wherfore art thou proude that art con-  
ceyued in synne / brought forth with wretchednes / lyuest  
in payne and trybulacyon / & shalte dye with anguyshe  
and veracyon. Wherto feedest þy carcass so delpeously  
with p:ecyous metes / and aournest it with so gaye & p:ec-  
cyous garmentes / the whiche within fewe dayes shall  
fede wormes in the sepulcre / and leuest thy soule naked &  
bare of vertues and good werkes / that is to be presented  
tofore almyghty god and his blyssed aungels in heuen.  
O why lettest thou so ytell pryce by thy soule / and thes-  
tyllhest more thy body than it. Sothly it is grete abu-  
sion the maystresse lady to serue and to be kepte in sub-  
iectyon / and the handmen to rule and haue dominacyon  
for sothly all the worlde may not be esteemed and repu-  
ted ryghtfully to the valure & pryce of one soule. for our  
lorde wolde not gyue his lyfe for all the worlde / the whi-  
che he gaue for mannes soule / therfore the pryce of the  
soule is grete / what cōmutacyon and chaūge than shalt  
thou gyue for thy soule / that gyuest it for nought. Wd  
not the sone of god respyng in the bdsome of his father  
descende from his regal seate to delpuct her fro the power  
of the deuyll / the whiche whan he sawe tryed and fyttered  
with snares of synne / and in poynt to be lost & deuoured  
with fendes / & dampned to perpetuall deth / he had pryce  
on her / & wepte for her that coude not wepe for her selfe / &  
not onely wepte / but suffred hymselfe to be slayne to re-

demer her with the raſon of his preſcious blode. O thou  
man mortall / beholde how preſcious an oblation was  
gyuen for the. Take hede man & vnderſtāde how moche  
noble thy ſoule is / and how greuouſ her woundes were /  
for whole helth it behoued Chryſt that was god & man  
to be ſo greuouſly wounded. Yf theſe had not ben mortall  
woundes & of deſth euerlaſtyng / the ſone of god ſholde ne-  
uer haue ſuffered deſth to hele them. Beware therfore that  
thou byſpende not and let at lye tell the hurte & payne of  
thy ſoule / of whome thou ſeeſt that hygh maieste of god  
haue ſo grete compaſſyon. He mourned & wepte for the /  
~~for the ſoule and walke the hede every night with com-~~  
pardon of her & plenty of ſerres. He ſhedde his preſcious  
blode for the. Weede thou thyne for hy by dayly punyſhe-  
ment of thy body. Whiche ſyth thou mayſt not ſpende at  
ones by martyrdome or deſth for the loue of hym. At the  
leſt waye ſpende it by moze eaſe / but by moze lenger  
martyrdome. Take noo hede ne regarde not to the vni-  
ceſfull concupſſence of thy fleſhe / but by the ghosly deſ-  
yre of thy ſoule. O how glorious ſhall the ſoule be whan  
it ſhall turne to his lord / yf it be not defouled with the  
fleſhe / but hath waſhed awaye all fylth / and is made  
pure and clene. Peraventure thou wylte ſaye that this  
is a harde thyng. I can not deſpyle the worlde / & hate  
myne owne body. I praye the tell me where be y<sup>e</sup> louers  
of the worlde y<sup>e</sup> ſometime dwelled amonge vs / of whome  
there remaineth not but powder & wormes. Take good  
hede what they be now / and what they were ſomtyme.  
They were men as thou arte / ate / dranke / and made me-  
ce / and ſpended they<sup>r</sup> dayes in pleaſure / & in a moment  
they be deſcended to the p<sup>r</sup>t of hell / and here they<sup>r</sup> bo-  
dys ben deputed to wormes / and they<sup>r</sup> ſoules to hote

fyre vnto suche tyme as they felawshypped and iogned  
togyder agayne in an vnhappy company / be put to euer  
lastynge fyre / the whiche were felowes in synne and wyck-  
kednes / for lyke as they were knytte togyder in one wyll  
and pleasure in synne / so shall they be punysshed with ly-  
ke payne. What hath profyted them bayne glorie / wycke  
myrth / worldly power or dominacyon / flesshely pleasure  
false and vntrue rychesse / grete householdes & wycked con-  
cupyscence. Where is theyr myrth / where is theyr playe  
and sportes / where is theyr hollye / where is theyr pryde.  
Beholde what sorowe & wretchednes cometh of so grete  
myrth and gladnes. What payne foloweth so grete plea-  
sure / they ben fallen from Joye & myrth in to grete mys-  
chere and hygh turmentynge. And lyke as it befell to  
them / so it may befall to the. For thou arte a man / erth  
made of erth. Whan cometh of erth / of erth thou arte / of  
erth thou lyuest / & in to erth thou shalt be turned whan  
thy last daye cometh / the whiche shall come hastily / and  
peraventure it shall come this daye. O syth we ben but  
fylth and dungue and erth / the whiche shall turne to erth  
How or wherof may we be proude.

**O**f the deth / and also of the paynes of wycked  
men after theyr deth.

Capitulo. vi.

**C**ertayne it is that thou shalt dye / but it is vncer-  
tayne whan / how / or where. For deth maketh hy  
redy agaynst y in euery place. And yf thou be wylle thou  
wylte alwaye make the redy agaynst hym where soeuer  
thou be. Of all thynges that ben vncertayne / there is  
none more vncertayne than is the houre of deth / & there  
is no thyng more certayne than deth is. For deth is sure

and vndoubted / but the houre of deeth is preuy and vns  
known. yf thou lyue after the fleshe / thou shalt be pun  
nysshed in the fleshe. yf thou desyre precyous clothynge  
vermyyn shall be strewed vnder the soj freshenes of thy  
araye / & thy couerynge shall be wormes. He that loueth  
better worldly thynges than god / glotony better than ab  
stynence / followeth the deuyll / & shall go with hym in to  
euertlastynge payne / but yf he amende. What mournyn  
ge trowest thou / what sorowe & heuynes shall be when  
wycked people shall be departed fro the blyssed company  
of sayntes fro the syght of god / & shall be taken in to the  
handes of deuylls / and go with them in to euertlastynge  
fyre / where they shall abyde euer without ende in sorowe  
and waylynge. Sothly they banysshed & outlawed ferre  
fro the blyssed cōfyttee of paradys / shall be turmented in  
perpetuall paynes of hell. They shall neuer se lyght / ne  
neuer haue sorow ne refresshyng / but by thousandes  
thousandes yeres they shall be crucyate and cruelly ture  
mented in hell / and shall neuer be deliuered fro thens /  
where the turmentour is neuer wery / & he that is ture  
mented shall neuer dye. The fyre wasteth & punyssheth  
there on suche maner / that it euer reseruet dampned  
people. The turmentynge ben done on suche wyse / that  
they are euer renued. For every man that is dampned  
shall suffre payne in hell accordynge to his synnes. And  
those synnes that be lyke / shall be punysshed with lyke  
payne. Noo thyng shall be herde there but wepyng /  
sighynge / sorowynge / waylynge / mournynge / & gna  
shynge of tethe. There shall nought be seen but vermyyn  
tothly and ferefull faces of turmentours / and the foulest  
and moost vgly felawshyp of fendes. Cruell wormes shal  
gnaue within the herte. There is excedynge sorowe /

abhomynable stench / waylunge / confusyon / wonder / &  
huge fere / and wretches shall brenne in euerlastyng fy-  
re alwaye without ende. They shall be crucyate and tur-  
mented in body with fyre / and in soule with the worme  
of conscience. There shall be sorowe intollerable / incom-  
parable stench / and horryble deth. Deth bothe of body  
and soule / without hope of mercy and forgiveness. But  
they shall so dye that they may euer lyue / and they shall  
so lyue that they may euer dye. Thus mannes soule is  
turmented euermore in hell for his synnes / or elles put  
in paradys for his merytes and good dedes. Chose we  
than one of these twayne / eyther to be turmented euer-  
more with wycked people / or els euer to Joye and make  
mercy with holy sayntes. Sothly bothe good and euill /  
lyfe and deth be put before vs / that we may extende and  
put forth our handes whether we wyll. And yf it be so  
that that dyedefull turmentynges make vs not aserue /  
at the leest waye let the grete rewardes of Joye excyte &  
stere vs to goodnes.

**O**f the rewardes of blyssed soules. And of the  
Joyes of heuen. Capitulo. vii.

**T**he rewardes of blyssed men ben to beholde god /  
to lyue with god / & to lyue of god / to be with god /  
to be in god / & to haue god that is moost noble and souer-  
ayne goodnes. There is perfyte felycite / perfyte myrth  
and Joye / very lyberte / perfyte charite / perpetual surete  
and sure perpetuite. There is very and true gladnes / of  
cunnynge plenteousnes / all beaute & faynes / & all beati-  
tude & blyssfulnes. There is cōtynuall peas / trouth & cha-  
rite / euerlastyng lyght / vertue & honeste / inestimable

Joye & myrth / excedynge sweetenes / & lyfe without ende /  
eternall glory / laude / quyet / rest / loue / swete con corde &  
vnite. In this blyss shall he abyde euermore w<sup>th</sup> our lord  
in whose conseynt shall be founde no synne / he shall be-  
holde hym at his owne lyberte / he shall haue hym to his  
grette pleasure & sweetenes / and he shall be knytte to hym  
in loue / to his grette myrth and gladnes. He shall lyue in  
eternyte / lyue in treuth / and Joye in gladnes. And lyke  
as he shall haue in abydynge perpetuall / so he shall haue  
cunnyng & knowlege w<sup>th</sup>out dyfficulte or hardnes / &  
in perpetuall rest euerylastynge felycyte. Sothly he shall  
be the cytezen of that holy cyte / where aungels ben cyte-  
zens / where almyghty god the father is the temple / and  
his soue the lyght / & the holy ghost is the loue & charite.  
O heuently cyte / a sure mansyon / a cōtreye conteynyng  
euery thyng / pleasaunt & delectable / whereof the people  
lyue without streffe or grutchynge / the dwellers lyue in  
quyetnes and rest / where men suffre none indygence ne  
scarfnes. O thou cyte of god / how gloriouse thynges are  
spoken of the. All that euer dwell in the / dwell in perpe-  
tuall Joye & felycyte. All ben Joyfull of our lord / whose  
countenaunce & there is meke / whose face is fayre & beau-  
teous / & speche very swete & delectuous. He is pleasaunt to  
se / swete to haue & kepe / & delectuous to loue. He is ynough  
of hymselfe fully to please & content vs. And also of hym  
selfe is a suffycient rewarde for our merytes. There is  
no thyng desired besyde hym / for what somer is desy-  
red / is founde in hym. It is grette lykynge & pleasure euers  
more to beholde hym / euermore to haue hym / & euermore  
to delue in hym / & to be ioyned & knytte to hym euermore  
in per fect loue. The vnderstandynge is made clere in hys  
And the desyre is purgfyed to knowe & loue treuth. And

In all the good and welth of man / that is to knowe & loue  
his maker. ¶ What grete folp than and madnes causeth  
vs to desyre the bytternes of byces / & to folowe perylls  
of this worlde / to suffre the vnfortunys of this vnstable  
lyfe. And so be subiecte of the wycked tyranny of þe deuyll  
and coueyte not rather to flee to the blyssed company of  
sayntes & felcype of aungels / to the solemnyte & feest of  
heuenly gladnes / and to the Joye & swetnes of contem-  
platyfe lyfe / that we may entre in to þe kyngdome of our  
lorde / and se thaboundant rycheffe of his goodnes. There  
we shall rest in ease / & we shall se how swete our lorde is /  
and how plentous the multytude of his swetnes is / we  
shall se þe braute of eternall glory / the byghtnes of sayn-  
tes / the honour & worship of þe regall mageste / we shall  
knowe the power of the father / the wysdome of the sone /  
and the moost benygne goodnes of the holy ghost. And so  
we shall haue knowlege of the holy Trinite. We se now  
bodily thynges by the body. Also we knowe the symy-  
lytude of bodily thynges by our soule. But than we  
shall se that sothfast treuth with clere syght of our soule.  
O blyssed and happy syght to se almyghty god verily in  
hymselfe to se hym in vs / & to se vs in hym in blyssedfull  
Joye and Joyfull blyss. We shall haue all that euer we  
shall desyre / so that we shall not lyst to desyre any more /  
we shall be blyssed with swetnes & loue of hym and deys-  
cousnes of beholdynge hym. The noblenes of the hygh  
felcype shall be when the clere godhede shall be knownen  
in his pure beyng / and than shall be comprehended and  
knownen clerely the blyssed Trinite / that is incomprehen-  
syble. The preuytees of þe godhede shall be shewed open-  
ly / very god shall be seen & loue. And that syght and loue  
fulfyllynge all the herte of man / shall be the hole perfectes

cyon of that felicity & blyss. One tongue shall be comyn  
to all myrrh without mercurie / one desyre & euertlastynge  
loue. Treith shall be shewed clerely / charite shall re-  
plenyshe / & both þe body & the soule shall be fully sate  
Manhede glorified shall shyne as the sonne. There shall  
be restfull helth / concord of body & soule. Angels & men  
shall Ioye togyder in one Ioye / speke togyder one speche /  
and be feested all in one feest. The loue shall not fayle / ne  
be made lesse. There shall be no sorowe ne payne for dys-  
ferryng of thynges desired / but all good thynges be pres-  
ent / for the blyssed presence of the mageste of almyghty  
god is all thynges to them all / & cōceynerh them fully in  
all that they desyre. His power / that is almyghty / wyl-  
dome / prynces / ryghtwysnes and vnderstandynge shall be  
comyn to all. In that perpetuall peas shall be no dyuer-  
sitye of tongues or language / but a praisable & a greable  
concorde of maners & desyres / in the floure of that pleasure  
the appetyte heped & sate with plentousnes shall de-  
syre no more / there shall be so moche felicity & blyss. For  
there shall be the hepe or ynough of felicity & blyss / ex-  
cepyng Ioye and myrrh / and plenteous gladnes.

**¶** Who is able to haue the Joyes of heuen. Ca. viij.

**B**ut who is he that is apte and cōuenient to these  
Joyes / sothly he that is a true penytent / a good  
obedynt / a louely folowe and a fapthfull scruaunt. A true  
and persyte penytent is euer in sorowe and labour / he  
soroweth for his synnes that ben present and also that  
ben past. And labouryth dysgently that he may beware  
and shone synnes to come. For very true and persyte pe-  
nauice / is to sorowe for synnes without ceasyng. He

foroweth for his synnes that he hath done / that he do ne  
comple no more suche synnes as he ought to forowe and  
bewaile fore. for he is not very penitent ne forowfull  
whiche dooth and commyseth continuallyliche offenc  
es as he ought to be penitent and forowfull fore. Ther  
fore if thou wylte be verily and perfectly penitent / cease  
of synne / and be in will and purpose no more to synne.  
¶ A good obedyent submytteth his will / and is refusyn  
ge for lese or for lothe / and giveth hym help unto our lord  
de god / that he may save. Whene herte is redy good lord  
myne herte is redy / it is redy to do what somer thou  
comandest it / it is redy with a bekenynge to obey re  
dyly at thy byddynge. And so it is redy good lord to ser  
ue the / to mynysstre and helpe my neyghbours / to kepe  
well my selfe / and to rest in contemplacion of heuently  
thynges. ¶ A good and an amiable or a lovely felowe  
is dylygent and scrupable to all / and noyous or greuous  
to none. He is dylygent and scrupable / for he is deuoute  
unto god / benygne and gentyll to his neyghbour / and  
sobre to the worlde. He is the seruaunt of our lord god /  
felowe of his neyghbour / and lord of the worlde. He  
hath heuently thynges that ben aboute hym to Joye in  
thynges that ben equall to hym to felawshyp and comp  
pany with / and thynges vnderneath hym to serue hym.  
He is noyous or greuous to none / but he dresseth and or  
dyneth lowe thynges to the profyte of myddwarde thyng  
es / and to the honour and worsipp of thynges aboue /  
subdued and folowynge heuently thynges / subduynge &  
rulyngge erthly thynges. ¶ A saythfull seruaunt is busy in  
contemplacion of god / & keepynge of hymselfe. Therefore  
put all thy dylygence to kepe thyselfe well. Than knowyn  
ge that thyne dylygence may neuer be sufficient to

kepe the without the helpe of god / call for the helpe of our  
loȝde. Than aske with deuoute prayer the defence & ke-  
pyng of holy aūgels to beholde in the the good / the plea-  
sant and perfecte wyll of thy maker. Purchase also with  
deuoute prayer þ helpe of all that reygnerh with Chyſt  
Benne by eche one ſyngulerly / make thy ſupplycacyon to  
them euery one ſyngulerly / & crye to them & ſaye. Haue  
mercy on me / haue mercy on me / ſpecially ye that ben  
my frendes haue ruth & pyte on me / receyue a banysſhed  
creature / neuertheles I wolde fayne be your ſeruaunt.  
Receyue your brother and ſeruaunt that fleeth to you for  
ſocour / your brother and kynneſman in the blode of our  
mercyfull redemer. Beholde a begger ſtandynge at the  
dore cꝛyng & knockynge. Open ye and lede hym to the  
kyng / that I proteſtate and couchynge lowe at his fete  
may ſhewe to hym all my wretchednes and neceſſytes  
that I ſuffer. ¶ At the laſt ſhewe thy herte with all the  
pragyn & kynrede therof to thy prelate / and let no ſynne  
abyde in the that is not put awaye by pure and clene con-  
feſſion. Also put Jeſu Chyſt vpon thy herte as a ſeale /  
and the locke & keper of thy lyfe / whome Chyſt keperh  
the dore of the herte and is porter therof / that all þ hous  
meyny of the herte go in and forth by hym / conſequentialy  
there ſhall be thoulandes vpon thoulandes of aūgels  
watchynge and keepynge at the gates of thyn outwarde  
wyttes. And there is no alvaunt and ſtraūger ſo bolde to  
bꝛeke thoſe terryble & ſerfull hoſtes for reuerence of the  
keper & viſſher / and for defence & keepynge of aūgels.

¶ A paſſynge good leſſon for to encreaſe in ver-  
tue and goodnes. And of charytable loue of thy  
neyghbour.

Capitulum. ix.

**S**e that thou be a curpous and a dyligent sercher  
of thy helth & dysposycyon. Dysculle and examyn  
weu thy lyfe euery daye. Take good hede how moche þ  
profyttest & how moche thou lackest / and how ferre thou  
arte from pure perfectyon. How thou arte in maners &  
condycyons. How in dedes in thy desyres / and how lyke  
thou arte to god / or how vnlyke. How nygh or how ferre  
thou arte fro hym / not in longe dystaunce of places / but in  
maners & dysposycyon. Study besyly to knowe thyselfe /  
for yf thou knowe thyselfe well / thou arte better & more  
comendable / than yf thyselfe vnknowen thou knewe the  
course of the sterres / the vertues of herbes / the com-  
plecyons of men / the nature of beestes / & had knowlege  
of all thynges in heuen / in erth / and in hell. And therfore  
rende the to thyselfe / and yf it be not alwaye / at the leest  
wyle somtyme amonge / rule & gouerne wysely thyne af-  
feccyons & desyres. Dresse well thy dedes / and correcte  
thyne excelle & mysdedes / let no thyng abyde within the  
vntamed & vntaught. Put all thy transgressyons & mys-  
dedes before thyne eyen / & ordeyne thyselfe as thou were  
an other. And so wape and sorowe thyselfe / wepe for thy  
wyckednes & synne wheriu thou hast offended almygh-  
ty god / & shewe to hym thy wretchednes. Shewe to hym  
also the malycie of thyne aduersaryes and enemyes. And  
whan thou offrest and presentest thyselfe tofore hym in  
retes / I praye the remembre me. For sothly wth I had  
knowlege of the in Chyyst / I loue the / and desyre & bere  
with me the mencyon and remembraunce of the thyder  
whyre vnlesfull thoughtes deserue turmentynge / & holy  
and honest thoughtes deserue rewarde & mede. Whan  
I praye I stande as a preest at the awter of god / & there  
haue mynde on the. Sothly thou quyttest me yf thou loue

me / & make me partener of thy prayers & deuoute oracions / I praye the let me be present with the in remembrance / there as thou byddest deuoute prayers before our lord for the and thy famlyer and homely frendes. Verueyle not though I sayd / let me be present / for yf thou loue me bycause I am the ymage of god / I am as present to the as thyne owne persone. For y same thyng that thou arte / I am. Sothly eury reasonable soule is the ymage of god / therfore he that seeketh the ymage of god in hymselfe / seeketh as well his neyghbour as hymselfe. And he that fyndeth it in sekynge in hymselfe / perceyueh and knoweth it in eury man. Sothly the syght and perceyuaunce of the soule is the vnderstandynge & knowlege. Therfore yf thou se thyne owne persone / than thou seest me that am the same thyng that thou arte. And yf thou loue god / thou louest me that am the ymage of god. And I in louynge god / loue the. And so whyle we seke one thyng and go towarde one thyng. Let vs alwaye be present togyder in our selfe / that is to saye / in god in whome we loue togyder.

How we sholde praye / loue / and worshyp god /  
and thynke on hym. Capitulo. x.

**W**han thou entrest in to the churche to praye and to worshyp god / leue without the hepe of flowynge thoughtes / and forgete betterly cure & charge of all outward thynges / that thou mayst take hede to god onely. For it may not be that a man speke ony tyme with god / & talketh or chattereth safely with all the worlde. Therfore gyue attendaunce & take hede to hym that gyueth attendaunce & taketh hede to the. Here whan he speket to the /

that he may graciously here whan thou spekest to hym.  
Thus it shall be yf þ apply thy selfe besyly to the louynge  
of our lord with due reuerence & dyligence. Yf thou at-  
tende and take hede dyligently to euery worde of holy  
scripture / I saye not that I do these thynges my selfe /  
but I wolde fayne do them / and I am soz that I haue  
not done them in tymes past / and it greueth me that I  
do them not now. But thou to whome is graunted more  
grace / be the meke ceteres of our lord to the with deuoute  
prayers. Praye to hym lowly and deuourly with ceteres &  
syghynges for remysyon and forgyuenes of thy synnes /  
and loue and glorifye hym in all his werkes with spiry-  
tuall and ghostly songes. For there is no present or gyfte  
more lykynge and pleasaunt to the hygh cytesyns of he-  
uen. Also there is no gyfte more acceptable and Joyfull  
to the hygh kynge of heuen / as hymselfe bereth wytnes  
sayenge. The sacrefyce of laude and praysonge shall ho-  
nour and worshyp me. O how happy shouldest thou be yf  
thou myght ones se with thy ghostly eye the pleasaunt  
orde of the heuently company / how prynces ioyned with  
the holy felawshyp of blessed virgyns / come to the pray-  
songe and worshyppynge of almyghty god with moost  
swete melody. Thou shouldest se without doubte / with  
how moche dyligence / and with how moche myrth they  
abyde amonge vs / whan we loue god assylyt and helpe  
vs / whan we praye be nygh to vs / in our medytacions  
watche and kepe vs whan we rest / defende and helpe vs  
in our prouysions and good labours. Sothly the heuen-  
ly potestates loue theyr bretherne and nayghbours / they  
Joye besyly togyder for them that receyue the herirage  
of helth / and cōfōrte them / teche them / & defende them / &  
they prouyde to euerythone in all thynges. Sothly they

desyre our comynge to them / for they lobe after to haue  
the hurte & losse of the countree redempted of vs. And they  
serche diligently & ben very gladd to here good of vs.  
They renne desyly bytweene god & vs / saythfully & truly  
beryng our contracyon & sorowe to hym. They disceyne  
not to be our felowes. for they ben now made mynystres  
to vs / for make them Joyfull and gladd when we ben  
conuerted to penance. Therfore let vs haste vs to fulfill  
them with Joye of vs. Woe to the who somerue thou art  
that desyrest to turne agayne to thy synnyng synnes &  
fylthy lypynge. Woe to thou to haue theyr frendshipp at  
the dreadfull Judgement / fro whome thou myste reue so  
moche & so veryly trusted Joye. They made moche Joye  
when we came to religion / as of them whome they sawe  
drawen & reuoked fro the gate of hell. Note that it be note  
yf they se them departe out of the gate of paradysse & go  
backwarde that haue the one sote in heuen / for though  
our bodyes ben bynethe / yet let vs haue our hertes aboue  
us. Therfore let vs renne / not with bodyly steppes / but  
with hertely affectyons & desyres. For not onely aungels  
but also the maker of aungels abydeth vs. Almyghty god  
the father abydeth vs & his chyldren & heyre to gyue vs  
possession of all his goodes. The sone of god abydeth vs  
as his bretherne and enherytours togyder / that he may  
offre vp to almyghty god his father the fruyte of his na-  
ture / & the pryce of his precyous blode. The holy ghost  
abydeth vs / sothly he is charite wherein we ben predesty-  
nate & ordeyned to perpetuall blysse fro the begynnyng.  
And no doubte but he wyll that his predestynacyon & or-  
dynaunce be fulfilled. Than sayth all the hole court of he-  
uen abydeth & desyret vs / let vs desyre with as freuent  
desyre as we may. For who somerue desyret not greatly

to se it. shall come therto with grete cōfusiōn & shamefast  
nes. Therfore who someuer is cōuersaunt dwelleth and  
abpderth in it with hely prayer and hely medytacyon and  
thought. shall go from hens in surete & shal be receyued  
in it with grete gladnes. Therfore where someuer thou  
be. praye within thy selfe. yf thou be ferte from an orator  
ry. trouble the not to seke a place. for thou thyselfe arte a  
place cōuenient. yf thou be in thy besynes or in any other  
place. praye. and there is a temple. Sothly the mynde  
ought oftentymes to be lyfte vp to god with hely prayer  
and bodyly obeyssaunce. for lyke as there is no moment of  
tyme wherein man occupieth not & nedeth the goodnes  
and mercy of our lord. so there ought to be no moment  
wherin he hath not hym present in his mynde. But per  
auenture þe wyllte saye. I praye dayly. but I se no fruyte  
of my prayer. but euen as I go to it. so I go from it. for  
there is none þe answereth me. none that speketh to me.  
none that gyueth me ought. but me semeth that I haue  
laboured in vayne. O this is þe folythe spekyng of man  
rakyng no hede what very lothfastnes prompteth for  
prayer. sayenge on this wyse. Sothly I say to you what  
someuer ye desyre by prayer. byleue ye stedfastly that ye  
shall haue it. & it shall be done to you. Therfore set not at  
lytell thy prayer. for he that thou prayest to setteth it not  
at lytell. but he cōsidereth it to be wyrtin in the boke of  
lyf before it go forth of thy mouth. And we ought to trust  
without doubte one of two thynges. for he shall gyue vs  
that we desyre. or elles that he knoweth more profitable  
to vs. thynke therfore of god the best that thou mayst. &  
of thyselfe the worst. & yet thou sholdest hope worse of thy  
selfe than thou mayst thynke. All þe tyme that þe thynkest  
not on god. couste it as lost fro the. Other thynges belonge

to other than vs. but tyme is ours onely. therefore watche  
well. & where someuer thou be. be thyne owne. & spende  
tyme well. and thou shalt be there in surete. Gyue not  
thy selfe to worldly thynges. but vse them to the profyte  
of thy soule. What place someuer thou be in dresse well  
thy thoughtes. & reuolue some hollesome thynges in thy  
soule. for sochly every place is apte & conuenient to good  
thoughtes & medytacions. Therefore gader togyder thy  
soule with a hole selfeite and Joye. & abyde at lyberte in  
thyne inward habytacyon. & walkynge in the largesse  
of thyne herte. make redy therin vnto Chryst a restinge  
place and a large chambre. for the mynde of a wyse man  
is alwaye to god. We shold haue hym alwaye before our  
eyen. by whome we haue our beyng. our lyfe & vnder  
standynge. for lyke as we in our beyng haue hym as  
auctour & maker. so yf we shall profyte in wysdome. we  
must haue hym a doctour & a teacher. & so we shall be blyss  
sed. We must haue hym yf gyuer of curtiastynge blyss. &  
in that we knowe that the ymage of hym (that is to saye  
that hygh & glorious Trinite) is in vs. for lyke as he is  
& in bothe wyse & good. so we in our maner haue a beyng  
and knowe that we haue a beyng. & are glabde that we  
haue that knowlege. Therefore vse thy selfe as yf temple  
of god. so that yf is in yf lyke to god. Sochly cheste honoure  
and worshyp to god. is to worshyp & folowe hym. yf thou  
be myke. thou folowest hym. for sochly the mynde of a  
myke man is a holy temple to our lord. & his herte is a  
cheste awer to hym. Thou worshyppest hym yf yf be mer  
cyfull lyke as he is mercyfull to all. Sochly it is an accep  
table hoste & oblacyon to god to do well to all men for the  
loue of Chryst. do all thynges euen as the chylde of god.  
that thou mayst be acceptable to hym yf hath bouchefafe

to call the his chyld. In all thynges that þ doost knowe  
well & haue in mynde that almyghty god is present/ther  
fore beware that neyther thy syght ne thy thought abyde  
in vnleful delectacon or pleasure. And be well ware that  
thou neyther saye ne do thyng that is vnleful for no ma  
ner of pleasure or lpyng/leest þ offende god in any dede  
or in any token therto/the whiche is present in euery plas  
ce & beholdeth what someuer thou doost. Sothly þ hast  
nede to be keppe well / for thou arte alwaye before þ eyes  
of a Judge that seeth all thynges. Thou art alway with  
hym in surete/ys thou rule thy selfe so that he vouchsafe  
to be with the. ys he be not with the by grace/he is nygh  
to the by vengraunce/but woo to the ys it be so with the.  
ys but woo to the ys he be not so with the /for almyghty  
god is wrothe with hym that he chastyseth not whan he  
synneth. For hym that he amendeth not by correccyon/  
he suffreth to peryshe in euerlastyng dampnacyn.

**O**f mannes herte. And of profyte in redyng of  
holy thynges.

Capitulo. xi.

**A**rtayne it is that both chyeteth the in euery place  
The deuyl layeth watche to take thy soule whan  
it is departed fro the body. But for all that be thou not as  
fride. For almyghty god ys thou be his seruaunt shall des  
lyuer the bothe fro deyth and fro the deuyl. God is a true  
and a faythfull felowe / he forsaketh not them that trust  
in hym / but ys he be forsaken before. Sothly he is lefte  
and forsaken whan the herte renneth with a wantyng  
and vnstable mynde by shewde & vnprofytable thought  
es. Therfore we ought to kepe it well / to holde it & rule  
it well with grete besynes & dplygence / that almyghty

god may rest therein. For amonge all creatures vnder he-  
uen that ben occupped with worldly vanities / there is  
no thyng so good more hygh and noble / and more lyke to  
god than is the herte of man. Wherefore our lord seeth  
or desireth none other thyng of the but a cleane herte /  
therefore make it pure & cleane by pure & cleane confessions &  
help prayer / that thou mayst be god with a cleane herte by  
continual beholdinge of hym / so that thou be subiecte  
circumspecte and attendaunt to hym in every place. Wyll  
well thy maners & condicions that thou mayst be quyet  
and restfull in thy selfe. Love all men / and behaue the as  
mercifully & goodly to all men / that thou mayst be praisable  
and restfull / and the chyld of god. Thus thou shalt be a  
good and a help / make & a true monke. And when thou  
arte suche one / I praye the remembre me. Woe is me / for  
I saye these thynges / and I do them not / & yet I do them  
sometime / I perswade not & abyde in them / I haue these  
in mynde / and kepe them not in my lyfe / I haue them in  
wordes & sermons / but in maners I shewe the lawe of  
god all daye in my herte & mouth / but I do contrary ther-  
to / I rede in it bothe of relygion & prayer / & I loue more  
redynge than prayer / neuertheles the scripture of god te-  
cheth no thyng but to kepe relygion / to loue vniuersally & to  
haue charite / but I wyl rather to redynge than  
to prayer / I haue more pleasure to rede than to here  
masse. Sometime some man carpeth for me / despyng  
to speke with me for his necessytes / & I take a booke that  
he or he wolde haue & rede thereon / and in redynge therein  
lette the scruple of charite / the affection of pyte / the tyes  
of compuncion / the profyte of masses / & the contempla-  
cion of heuynly thynges. Neuertheles there is no thyng  
in this lyfe that saoureth sweeter / no thyng is more

greedyly taken / no thyng sparreth to the mynde from the  
worlde / no thyng strengtheneth the soule so agaynst the  
temptacions / no thyng excytereth & helpeth a man so to  
good werke and good labour / as redyng and prayer.

**O**f wauerynge and vnstablenes of the mynde  
and thoughtes. Capitulum. xij.

**O** God lord haue mercy on me / for I synne there  
moost where I sholde make amendes for my syn-  
nes. Oftentimes whan I praye in þe churche / I take no  
hede what I saye / lothly I praye with my mouth / but  
whyle my mynde is wauerynge without I lese the fruyte  
of my prayer. My body is within / but my herte is with-  
out / and therfore I lese that I saye. For if profyteth lytel  
to synge onely with hope / without the entencion of herte  
And therfore it is greet puerlite & fromardnes / ye & mo-  
che folp / & greet to be loched / whan we presume to speke  
with the lord of mageste in prayer / and lyke as we had  
no wytte or vnderstandynge we turne away our eeres /  
and turne our herte and mynde to vncouenable fables &  
trydes. For it is an outragious folp and greuously to be  
punished / whan moost byle & hylthy dust dysceyneth to  
here the maker of heuen & erth spekyng to hym. Soth-  
ly there can no tongue expresse the suffraunce & gentylnes  
of our maker & mercyfull lord / that dayly beholdeth vs  
wretches turnynge away our eeres / closynge our harde  
hertes. And yet for all that he cryeth to vs sayenge. O ye  
synners turne agayn & remembre your selfe / take hede &  
se / for I am god. God spreketh to me in psalmody and I to  
hym. And yet whan I saye the psalms I take no hede of  
whome the psalme is. Therfore I do greet injury and

monge to god / whan I praye hym to here thy prayer /  
the whiche I my selfe that bydde it here not. I praye hym  
to take hede to me / & sochly I my selfe take neyther hede  
to my selfe ne to hym. But I do that that is moche worse  
for I laye tofoze his syght abhomyable stench & fylth  
whyle I reuolue in my herte soule thynges & vnprofta-  
ble. There is no thyng in me moze vnsable and moze  
feynge than is my herte / the whiche as ofte as it leueth  
me & renneth fro me by euill thought / so ofte it offendeth  
god. Whyn herte is a vayne herte an vnsable & vnscrut-  
table whan it is layde by his owne arbytrement & lacketh  
the helpe of god / it may not be stedfast in it selfe / but of all  
mouable thynges it is moost mouable / of all vpolable  
thynges moost vpolable / it is distracte and withdrauen  
by infynyte thynges / and renneth hyther & thither by  
innumerable wayes. And whan it seeketh rest amonge  
opuerse thynges it fyndeth none / but abyderh styll lyke  
a wyrtche in labour / wyde of rest. It cōcordeth not with  
it selfe / but dyscordeth from it selfe. It skipperh from it  
selfe / it altereth and chaungeth the wyll / it chaungeth  
cōseple / it edyspeth & buyldeth newe thynges / destroyeth  
olde thynges / buyldeth agayne that it hath destroyed / &  
yet it chaungeth agayne & este soone / & ordyeth afterward  
the same thynges ofte tymes on other facions. For it wyll  
and wyll not / & so it tarpeth neuer in one estate / but lyke  
as a myll renneth aboute sofly & forsaketh no thyng  
but gryndeth what somer is put therein / and yf there  
be nought put therein / it cōsumeth & wasteth it selfe. So  
is myn herte alway meuyng & neuer resteth / but whes-  
ther I slepe o: wake it is alwaye dremyng & thyngyng  
what somer cometh therto / & lyke as grauell o: sonde  
yf it be put in to a myll / butteth & wasteth it / and pytche

maketh it soule / and chaffe occuppeth in bayne / so bytter  
thoughtes trouble my herte / maketh it soule & boile /  
chaunge it / inquiete it / & make it wey. Thus my herte  
whyles it hyderh not Joye to come / and seketh not the  
helpe of our lord / it is drawen ferre fro the loue of heuen  
ly thynges / and is occupied with the loue of earthly thynges.  
Whan it flyppeth fro them and is trapped in these  
banite recepueth it / curyouse ledeeth it / couerlyt tyllith  
it / pleasure decepueth it / fleshely lust defoulet it / enuy  
beterh it / wythe troubleth it / heuynes turmenteth it.  
And thus by unhappy falles it is drownded in all byces /  
for it hath leest on god / the whiche myght haue suffyled  
it. It wandreth in many thynges / & seketh here & there  
where it may rest / but it fyndeth no thyng that may suf  
fyle it tyll it turne agayne to hym / it is conduyted fro  
thought in to thought / & chaungerh by dyuerse desyres  
that at the leest waye it may be suffyled with the varia  
cyon and chaunge of thynges by whole qualite it may not  
be suffyled. Thus unstable is þe wretchednes of mannes  
herte / whan the grace of god is withdrawen. And whan  
it turneth agayne to it selfe / & dyscusseth all that it hath  
thought / it fyndeth nought / for it was noo werke but  
thought / that maketh many thynges of nought.

**T**he cause and also the remedy of mauerynge of  
the mynde. And of confellon. Capitulo. xiiij.

**I**n this wyse sothly deceyueth the ymagynacion  
caused by deceptes of deuyls. Almyghty god byde  
deth me gyue hym myne herte. And bycause I am not  
obedient to hym whan he commaundeth / I am rebell  
to my selfe / and therefore I may not subdue me to my

selfe tyll I be subiecte to hym & serue my selfe agayn my  
will / the whiche will not serue hym with my will. Wher  
heret maketh moze in one moment than all þ men in the  
worlde may make perlyte in one yere. I am not boved &  
oued with god / and therfore I am deuyded in my selfe. I  
may not be boved & made one with hym but by charite /  
ne subdued to hym but by humylyte / ne I can not be be-  
ry meke but by treuth. Than it is expedient that I dys-  
cusse and crampe my selfe in treuth / that I may knowe  
howe hyle / howe freyle / and howe slippery & vnstable I am.  
And whan I knowe all my wretchednes / it is necessary  
that I crie to hym that hath made me / without whome  
I may nought / and without whome I may do nought.  
And bycause I wente fro god by synnyng / I may not  
turne agayne to hym but by true confessyon. Therfore it  
behoueth to confesse that that is to be cōfessed. For I ne-  
uer cōfessed my synnes by the same maner and the same  
entent that I sinned / ne I remembre not all / what for  
oldnes / & what for myltitude of them. And those that I  
confessed / I confessed not cleane for foulnes of them. Also  
I haue deuyded my confessyon that I myght shewe dy-  
uerse synnes to dyuerse preestes. And so I lacked forgy-  
uenes that I hoped to haue comen to by partyes. For it  
is a cursed sepnyng to deuyde synnes / and pare them as  
bour / and pull them not by by the rootes. Sothly confes-  
sion is not profytable but yf it be in treuth of mouth and  
cleannes of herte. And that there may be thre to bere vs  
wytnes in heuen / the facher / the sone / and the holy ghost.  
Let vs make preestes wytnes of our hertes & mowthes  
that euery worde may stande in the mouth of two or thre  
wytnes. yf thou saye it is ynough to me to confesse my  
synnes to god onely / for the preest may not absolue me

fro my synnes. To this not I but saynt James answereth / sayenge. Confesse your synnes one to another. for it is accordyng that we whiche by synne haue be struyn and fromwarde to god / make our selfe by confessyon to his preestes and mynystres. And man that was made after thymage of god neded no medyatour and means to kepe hym in grace / now he may not recouer it whan it is lost but by a man a medyatour and means. Therfore euery synner sorowe & sygh & take fere & drede for his synnes. Let hym labour helyp & seke helpers / intercessours and meanes to praye for hym. Let hym fall downe lowe and mekely to man that wolde not stande mekely nygh to his maker / for that is moost helyfull / that he be penitent & sovy in his herte / and confesse his synnes and trespasses with his mouth / that god the whiche before is nygh to hym by grace to pyrke his herte to penaunce / than be nygh by mercy that he may grue the confessed man forgiveness of his synnes. And yf it be so that peradventure the synner be penitent / and in þe artycle of nede may not haue confessyon / we ought to beleue fapthfully that the bygh priest fulfilleth in hym that þe mortall myght not. And in this case it is done and fulfilled without doubte anent god that the man truly wolde haue fulfilled / but he myght not / for contempte or despyse letted and withholde not his confessyon / but necessitye.

**A**ccusynge by confessyon of dyuerse synnes. Ca. xiiii.

**I**n the chapytre where I ought to haue amended my synnes / I haue added and put synnes to synnes. Whan I accused or complayned of for them haue ether excused them by some means / or elles I haue all togeder. L. Ber. E

gyder denyed them / or elles I haue defended them / and  
answered vnparrently and without reacion / and that is  
woyste of all. Syth there is noo synne wherwith I am  
not somewhat fylled / or myght be fylled / it is ryght that  
all occasyon remeued & put awape I promette mekely to  
amende how someuer and of whome someuer I be accus  
sed or complayned of / that I may therby be deliuered  
fro synne done & to come. ¶ Take hede here in as well to  
the ordze as to the nombze / for we goo compynly fro lesse  
cuyll to the more. I ferynge the multytude of myn owne  
synnes / haue dradde to reprene transgressyons and tres  
pases of other. And therfore I haue ben an auctour of  
deth / for I haue not expelled & thurst out benym / that  
I by due callynge on myght haue put out. I haue had  
indignacyon agaynst them that repreneu me of bytes / &  
I haue hated those that I ought to haue loued. Those  
thynges that noyed me or dyspleased / I haue desyred  
theyr destruction / & yet I knewe that they were good in  
theyr nature & kynde / & made of a good maker / but they  
were noysome to me bycause I was cuyll and bled them  
cuyll. For there is no thyng contrary to me but I my  
selfe. It is myn what someuer may noye me / and I am  
a burthen to my selfe. Also I haue desyred that god shoul  
de not knowe my synnes / or that he wolde not / or that he  
myght not punyssh them. And so I wolde god to haue  
be vnwyse / vnryghtwyse / & impotent / the whiche yf we  
were he shoulde not be god. There is no pryde aboue my  
pryde. Therfore the wordes of my respects ben sette fro  
my helth. Sothly my pryde is suspectte to god / & it may  
not be that I with it be turned agayn to grace. For theyr  
lodgynge is ouers / & they may not dwell bothe togyder  
in one soule / the whiche wolde not dwell bothe togyder in

heuen. Sochly pyde began in heuen / but it is as bus  
myndfull of the waye þ it fell by / myght not turne thyder  
afterwarde. Whan the apye was troubled with reyne oꝝ  
grette colde / oꝝ grette hete / I gruched wyckedly agaynst  
god. For soth all thynges that we receyue to þ ble of lyfe  
we turne to þ ble of synne. And therfore ryght is that we  
the whiche synne in all thynges be synneten & pynnyshed  
in all thynges. I haue oftentymes at dysynne scrupel brot  
hen my boyce that I myght synge the sonnet. Often tyme  
I had moze pleasure in mesuryng of þ boyce / than  
in compunccion of the herte. Sochly almyghty god fro  
whome none vniuersall dede is by d / desyret no clennes of  
boyce / but clennes of herte. For whan þ synger is aboute  
to please the people with his boyce / he prouoketh our loꝝ  
de to wyche w his shrewde maners. I haue oftentymes  
by grette importuntye and subtiltye oꝝ wylfynnes of mynde  
gotten lyce of my prelate to speke oꝝ to do some ocher  
thyng like a wretche / takynge no hede that he decey  
ueth & begyleth hymselfe / that eyther openly oꝝ pryuely  
is about ward that his ghostly father may enioyne hym  
that that he desyret. I haue oftentymes desyred to gre  
tely a noble oꝝ a knyfe / oꝝ some suche thyng of lytell va  
lure / and haue not confessed it / for I hoped not it had ben  
synne bycause of the lytell valure. But sochly it is lytell  
dyfference whether a hyle oꝝ a precious thyng be desy  
red whan the affectyon oꝝ desyre is vlyke corrupte. For  
the knyfe is not vyce / but the vniuersall appetyte of the  
knyfe. As golde is not vyce / but þ vniuersall desyre of gol  
de. I haue not trauayled in labour so moche as I myght  
oꝝ shold haue done. I haue ben so ydle in syllence / that  
in that ydelnes I thought no profyte of my neygbbour.  
I soughte not the contemplancon of god. Sochly he

profyteth I tell to hymselfe that pſyteth not to other whan  
he may. I haue boſted me of ryghtwylnes / wenyng  
there had ben a ryght grete vertue / where was a grete  
fall of synne. Also I made byces of vertues. For ryght-  
wylnes whan he exceedeth and paſſeth his duty and ma-  
ner of meſure engendreth the byce of crueltie. And ouer-  
moche pyte & pacyence byngeth forth bykynge of dyſci-  
pline and waſtonnes. And ſo oftentymes that is byce /  
the whiche ſome men wene is vertue. As a rempſſe / bus-  
quetnes / ſome men wene be mekenes. And the vertue  
of ſlouch / faulſly ſeyneth to be the vertue of quyetnes and  
reſt. I ſepned me to be that that I was not. I ſayd that  
I wolde that I wolde not. I ſayd one thyng with my  
mouth / and I thought an other with my herte. And ſo  
I helde my wolupſſhe conſcience vnder a ſhepes ſynne.  
For a wolupſſhe conſcience is a ſlacke and ſlowe conuer-  
ſacyon / beſtly cogytacyon / ſeyned confeſſyon / ſhorte and  
ſeldome compuntyon / obedyence without deuotyon /  
prayer without intencion / redyng without edyfyng  
and profyte / a ſeruaunt without circumſpeccyon and tas-  
kyng hede. O how harde ben theſe to me that I ſpeke /  
for in ſpekynge of them I ſtryke myne owne ſelfe. Ne-  
uertheles becauſe I deny not my ſelfe to be a ſinner / but  
knowe my ſynne / perauenture agaynſt god that meke  
Judge / this knowlege of ſynne ſhall purchaſe me forgy-  
uenes. I ſhall tell therfore my wretchednes / yf perauens-  
ture his grete pyte meue hym. I ſhall tell the my ſynne /  
for the confeſſyon of ſynne is the begynnynge of helthe.  
I haue a grete crowne and roude clothynge / I kepe the  
rule of faſtynge / I kepe the houre of ſerupce / but myne  
herte is ferre fro my god. I beholdynge the outward  
thynges / deme that all thynges ben ſafe and well in me /

not felynge the inward worme that gnaweth within.  
Strangers haue eten and wasted my strength, and I  
haue not knowen it / and therfore I walke all toge-  
der in those thynges that ben our warde / & unknowynge  
myne inward thynges / am effused and spylle as water  
and am brought to nought / forgetynge thynges past /  
neglygent of thynges present / not prouydynge thynges  
to come. I am bakynge to benefices and good dedes /  
prone and redy to euill thynges / and slowe to good thyn-  
ges. yf I beholde my selfe only I se that I am backe /  
and yf I beholde not my selfe only / I knowe not my selfe  
And whan I beholde my selfe / I may not suffice my selfe  
I fynde so moche in me that it is worthy rebuke and con-  
fusyon. And the oftter and more subtylly that I dysculle  
my selfe / the more abhominacyon I fynde in corners of  
myne herte. For syth I began to synne / I coude neuer  
escape one daye without synne / but I adde and put syn-  
nes to synnes / and I haue them before myne eyes / and  
yet I sorowe not. I se thynges that I shold be ashamed  
of / and yet I am not ashamed. I beholde thynges to be  
sorowed / but I sorowe not / that is a sygne of deth and to-  
ken of dampnacyon. For a membre or lyddie that feleth  
no payne is deed. And an insensyble soie that is without  
felynge is incurable. I am lyght and wanton / and I  
correcte not my selfe / but I turne agayne dayly to synnes  
that I haue confessed and ben shryuen of. And I keppe  
me not fro the dyche where in to ether I my selfe haue  
fallen / or els I haue seen other fall in. And whan I shold  
wepe and praye for euill that I haue done / and for good  
dedes that I haue ben neglygent to do. Alas for sorowe  
it turneth me contrary. For I haue ben slacke and colde  
from the feruour of prayer / & now I abyde colde without

helpynge. And therfore I may not wepe my selfe / for the  
grace of tere is gone fro me / I may not layne my spyn-  
nes. for where someuer I go my conscience goth with  
me / berynge with it what someuer I haue put therein /  
whether it be good or euill. It kepeth her whyle I lyue.  
And whan I am deed it shall yelde agayne that that it  
toketo kepe. yf I do well it is redy at hande. And yf me  
thynketh I do well and exalte my selfe therof / it is not  
absent but present. It is present to the lyuynge / it fol-  
loweth the deed. And wher as my Joye is / there is con-  
fusioun vnseparable / after the qualyte of that that is put  
and betaken to the conscience. Thus in myn owne hous  
and in myne owne houlholde I haue accusers / Judges  
and turmentours. My conscience accuseth me / mynde  
is wprnes / reason the iudge / pleasure the pryson / dyde  
the turmentour / the frowarde delpte the turmentynge.  
Sothly as many euill pleasures as there ben / there  
shall be so many turmentynge. for therwith we be pun-  
nyshed wherof we haue pleasure.

**O**f the ghostly enemyes / the flesshe / the woylde  
and the deuyll. And also of theyr temptacyons / and  
resyltence agaynst them. Capitulo. xv.

**H**elp me my lord god / for myne enemyes / that is  
to saye / the body / the woylde / and the deuyll haue  
besyged and layde aboute my soule. I may not flee fro  
my body / ne chace it fro me / I must nedes cary it aboute  
for it is tyed to me. It is not lesfull to destroye it. I am  
constrayned to sustayne it. Whan I fede it I nouryshe  
myne enemy agaynst me. yf I etc ynough & it be stronge  
the helthe of it is aduersary to me. Sothly the woylde

hath layde aboute & besyged me on euery syde / & wound-  
ded me with his arrowes by fyue gates / that is to saye /  
fyue bodyly wyttes. The eye beholdeth and turneth the  
wytte of the mynde / the eere heareth & boweth therto the  
entent of the herte. Smellynge letteth cogytacion and  
thought / the mouth speaketh and often tymes deceyueth.  
Hardour & herte of lust for a lytell occasioun is excyted &  
stirred. And but it be soone left & overcome / among it oc-  
cupyeth and heteth / brenneth and kyndeleteth all the bo-  
dy. For fyrst it picketh and tryketh the firste a lytell  
with thought. Than it defoulet the mynde with foule  
delectacion. And at the last it subdueth the mynde to it  
by consentynge to synnedones. The deuyll also whome I  
may not se / & therfore I wolde rather be the more ware  
of hym / for he hath bended his bowe mysly and pyru-  
ly / hath put therein his arrowes to shote at me / hath thyt  
to hyde gylbers and snares for me. And hath sayd who  
shall espye them. He hath put a gylber in golde & syluer /  
and in all thynges that we myse / whan we ben deys-  
ted euyl in them we ben snared. And he hath not onely  
layde a snare / but also lyne. Lyne is loue of possessioun /  
desyre of cogytacion and thought / coueytynge of wey-  
shyp / and pleasure of the fleshe / with the whiche the sou-  
le is snared / lyned / and tyed that it may not fflye by the  
wayes of heuynly. Upon with the fethers of contempla-  
cion. The arrowes of the deuyll ben / Ire / wyth / enuy /  
lechery / and other wherwith the soule is wounded / and  
who is he that may quench the his fyre darter. Alas for so-  
rowe / a fawchfull man is often tymes overcome with  
these darter. Woe is me / for batayles ben on euery syde /  
darter fflye on euery syde. On euery syde ben temptacy-  
ons & perpyles. What waye somer I turne there is no

surete to me. And I drede bothe those thynges that ben  
pleasaunt and that ben dyspleasaunt. Bothe hunger and  
refectyon / slepe and watche / labour & rest fyght agaynst  
me. Bourde is no lesse suspecie to me than wathe / for I  
haue scādyed many in bourdyng. And I drede no lesse  
prosperyte than aduersyte / for prosperous thynges des  
ceyue me vnware with theyr sweteness. But thynges that  
ben vnprosperous bcause they haue some bytternes /  
as bytter potion and drynke make me suspecie and fered.  
I fere more euyl that I do pryuely / than that I do open  
ly / for that euyl that no man seeth / no man repleueth.  
And where there is no drede of rebuke / the tempter the  
deuyll is moche bolde / and wyckednes is lychtlyr done.  
No merueyle / for there is batayle on euery parte / and  
peryll and drede on euery syde. And lyke as they done  
that dwell where warre is / so must we lōke hyther and  
thyther / & turne the heed aboute to lōke at euery cragge  
or stonde. The fleshe tempteth me with thynges of lust  
and pleasure. The worlde with bayne thynges. And the  
deuyll with bytter thynges. As ofte as flesshely cogytas  
cyon moueth my mynde vnportunely with mete / dryn  
ke or slepe / and other carnall thynges perteynyng to the  
body / the fleshe speketh to me. And whan the herte is  
occupied with bayne thoughtes / as with ambicyon &  
desyre of worldly worshyppes / with boastyng and pryde /  
it cometh of the worlde. And whan I am prouoked vn  
portunely to Ire / to wathe / and bytternes of the soule /  
it is suggestyon of the deuyll / the whiche behoueth to be  
resysted and withstande / as it were the deuyll hymselfe  
and to shone and flee as fro the paynes of hell. It is the  
properte of deuylls and sendes to offere to vs euyl sug  
gestyons / and our duty is / not to consent to them. Soth

ly as ofte as we relye / we overcome the deuyl / we glad  
aungels / and honour god. Our lord hymselfe exhorteth  
vs to fyght / and helpeth vs to gete the vyctory. He behol  
deth how we fyght / and helpeth vs when we faile. And  
crowneth vs when we gete the vyctory.

**O**f the deuyl / and how he tempteth man by  
the fleshe. Capitule. xvi.

**O**y carcass made of claye holdeth the condempnons  
therof / and therefore I haue of it thoughtes of in  
ciennes and soule pleasures. Of the world thoughtes  
of curyosite and vanite. And of the deuyl of bytternes  
and malice. These thre enemyes fyght agaynst me and  
pursue me / somtyme pryncely & somtyme openly / but al  
waye malyciously. Sothly the deuyl trusteth chely in  
helpe of the fleshe / for an enemy of a householde noyeth  
moost / and it hath made couenaunt with hym to destroye  
me / for it was brought forth of synne / nourysshed in synne  
Corrupte gretefully at his begynnyng / but moche more  
corrupte by euyl customes. And that is the cause that it  
is so contrary to the soule / that it grutcheth soo moche /  
and is soo vnpatient to be taught / and entyseth to vn  
lesfull thynges / and obeyeth not to reason / and wyll not  
be restrynted with any drede. That crooked serpent ene  
my of mankynde helpeth it / and blyeth it. for he hath  
none other desyre / labour ne study / but to lese our soules  
This is he that bespylly merketh euyl / speketh subtylly /  
entyseth craftly / deceyuech wylly / cryeth vnclefull  
meynynges. And setteth on fyre benymous cogytacions  
moueth batayle and stryfe / nouryssheth hatred / incyteth  
and sturtheth to glotony / moueth to lechery / cryeth the

Mede. i. Ser.

f i

despyre of the fleshe / maketh redy occasyon of synne / and  
seareth not to tempte the hertes of men with a thousande  
craftes of hurte & noyenge. This is he that synpeth vs  
with our staffe / & byndeth our hādes w our owne gyrdell  
that our body þ which is gyuen to vs to our helpe / may  
be to our hurte & schādre. It is a greuous stryfe & grete  
peryll to fyght agaynst an enemy of household / namely  
syn we be straungers / & he a cypresyn. He dwelleth in his  
regyon / & we ben outlawes & pylgryms. It is also grete  
Jeopardy to susteyne so ofte / so conynual and dāpely con-  
flictes & batayles agaynst the matches & subtyltes of  
deceyte of the deuyl the whiche is very subtyll / bothe by  
nature & also by longe exercyse & vse of his malyce.

**O**f the blysse of heuen.

Capitulo. xlii.

**M**y lord god deliuer me from myn enemyes / and  
from them that haue hated me / for they haue ben  
conforted agaynst me. Forsothe I þ haue lyued agaynst  
my selfe vnto this houre / shall begyn now by thy grace  
to lyue to my selfe. We sholde lyue / so that whan the body  
begynneth to be deuoured with wormes / the soule may  
make mery with sayntes in heuen. The spiryte sholde be  
dressed towarde that place that he sholde go to. We sholde  
haste chyder where we sholde alway lyue / and where we  
shall neuer drede to dye agayne. Wherfore loue we so mos-  
che this slippy and saylynge lyfe / where we lyue with so  
moche labour / where we vnneeth content & sarysfe our  
body of that that is necessary in etyng / drynkynge / and  
slepyng. We ought moche more to loue euerylastyng lyfe  
where we shall suffre no labour / where is chere myzthe /  
chere felcrite & blyss. Happy lyberte and happy blyss.

Where men shall be lyke to the angels of god / and ryght  
wysse men shall shyne as the sonne in the kyngdome of  
theyr father. Of what maner crownt thou shalt be than  
the bryghtnes of soules / when the lyght of bodys shall  
haue the bryghtnes of the soule. There is no heuyness /  
no trouble / no sorowe ne dyete / no labour / no deth. But  
perpetuall helthe alwaye perscurraunt and abydinge.  
There shall be no malyce ne mysery of the flesshe. There  
is no lechenes / no necessitye / no hunger / no thurst / no colde  
ne hete / no sayntnes of faste / ne other temptacions  
of the enemy. No wyll to synne / no leysler to trespase / but  
all thyngs shall be in gladnes and Joye. And men shal so  
shypped to aungelles shall flouryshe euermore without  
insynpte of body. There shall be insynpte myrrh / curte  
lastyng blysse / wherein that that is ones purchaced shall  
allwaye be possessed. There is rest fro labour / peas of  
enemyes / myrrh of nouctees / syhernes of eternyte / sweet  
tenes and delectacon of the euertlastyng blysse and  
syght of god. And who is he that despyeth not gretely to  
dwell there / bothe for rest / peas and myrrhe / eternyte /  
and the blyssed syght of almyghty god. There is no pyl  
grym / but who soeuer may deserue to come thyder /  
shall dwell sykerly in that perpetuall countree / alwaye  
gladde and alwaye sacrate of the glorious syght of god.  
And the more that one is obedyent to another for god /  
the more rewarde shall he receyue there. And the more  
that he loueth god / the more clerely he shall se hym. For  
the ende of man is to beholde god.

¶ Of the despyllinge of worldly thynges. Of the  
olde man. And of the pyte / gentylnes / and mercy  
of our lord god.

Capitulo. xviij.

f ii

**T**he dayes ben of man as a shadowe vpon the erth  
and he hath none abydinge / but whan he wyl  
not what he standeth surely / he is nygh nought. Wher  
fore than gadrest thou the treasures in erth / ych bothe  
that that is gathered and the gatherer passe awaye with  
out loue. And thou man what fruyte lokest thou after to  
haue of the worlde / whose fruyte is hurte and losse / the  
ende of whome is deth. Wolde god thou woldest sauour  
and vnderstande / and prouyde for thy laste endinge. I  
knowe one that hath lpyed with the homely many pe  
ces / sytten at thy table / and taken mete of thy hande /  
slept in thy bosome / and spoken with the whan he wol  
de. He sholde be thy seruaunt by ryght heritage. But  
because thou hast nourished hym delicately from his  
chyldehode / and spared the rodde / he is made obstinate /  
and hard lyke his sote aboute thyn heed / a hard brought  
the to scrupitude and bondage / and ruleth the cruelly.  
But perauenture thou wylte aske who this is. It is  
thynne olde man that crepeth downe and maketh foule  
thy soule / that setteth at nought the countree that we  
sholde desyre. for he saoureth not / but seeketh thynges  
onely that be flesshely. This man is blynde / dese / and  
dumbe from his natyure / wythed in his aenge / rebell to  
verue and trowth / and enemy to the crosse of Chyyst.  
He mocketh an innocent and a symple man. He walketh  
in hygh thynges and metuayllous / that ben aboute his  
degree. His bolle & his pryde is more than his strength.  
He dyedeth none / he worshyppeth none / he sayth in his  
follyshenes that there is no god. He wexeth wery and  
slake in good thynges / and is gladde with other mens  
new ruyles. He is nourished with bakene thoughtes /  
and persecuteth in them without werynes. He scatter

rathe and wasteth his owne goodes as a reueler and a  
waster. He couertheth and reueth other men as a nei-  
gon. He gathereth to hym shame and sclaunder. frys-  
ge and dyscypfull / and prouokynge the wrath of god.  
This man is borne all in synne. And so he is nourysshed  
the frende of wychednes / the sone of deyth / the vessel of  
wrathe and rebuke / and reby to peryshe. And yet presu-  
meth he to tell and shewe the ryght wysnes and lawes  
of god. And spekerh the testament of god. He hateth dys-  
cyplyne. He casteth our lord behynde his backe. When  
he seeth a thefe / he remeth with hym / and putterh his  
porcyon and parte with aduouterers. He putterh sclau-  
nder agaynst the chyldren of his mother / and trespas-  
sers the fre of god vpon hym. And wyll take thyn herita-  
ge from the in the daye of fre / and reue it from the vpon  
the erth. And thou deniest not so grete iniury / but dys-  
symulynge spekest not one harde ne greuous worde to  
hym / ne shewest no wrath ne angry countenance to  
hym / but fauourest hym that flattereth the. Thou playest  
with a mocker. Knowest thou not that it is Jhnas that  
playeth with the. This is no playe of chyldhode ne of  
symplenes or Innocency / but it is the mockynge / the  
hurte and deyth of the soule. Now hath he thowen the  
downe heedynge in to the dyshe that he hath made.  
Now arte thou wounded / now arte thou effeminate /  
now arte thou oppressed with the pockes of wychednes  
and thraldome / and thou arte troden soule vnder his  
fete. O thou wretched and myserable man / who shall  
despyer the fro the bondes of this rebuke. Wylt thou by god /  
and fall downe this armed man / fall he downe and be  
he all to broken. Also he is a wyched man / the deipster

of god / the inordynate louer of hymselfe / the frende of the  
worlde / and the seruant of the deuill. How semeth the  
yf thou vnderstande ryght / thou wylte saye with me /  
he is worthy deeth / put hym on the crosse. Dyfferre noo  
lenger / dyfferre no lenger / spare no lenger. But hastily  
and instantly / boldly crucifye this man. But let it be  
vpon the crosse of Chryst / in whome is helthe and lyfe /  
to whome yf thy man crucified crye / he shall here hym  
benygne and werynges & sayenge. Thou shalt be with  
me this daye in paradys. O how grete is the pyte of  
Chryst. The wretche was without hope of helth. But  
the loue of god is soo grete and soo tender and free / his  
gentylnes soo redy / his mekenes soo meruayllous / his  
suffraunce soo pacyent / that he hereth hym graciously  
that cryeth to hym. For he is mercifull. O how grete is  
the mercy of god. How ineffable and vnspkable is the  
ryght hande of almyghty god. Yesterdays he was in der  
kenes / and to daye in shynnyng of lyght. Yesterdays in  
the mouth of the lyon / and to daye in the handys of our  
saupour Chryst. Yesterdays in the gates of hell / and to  
daye in the delptes of paradys. But what profyteth  
these litters of monycon / but yf thou put the litters of  
deeth fro the consyence. What profyteth these thynges  
wryten and vnderstande / but yf thou rede and vnder  
stande thy selfe. Therfore gyue dilygence to inwarde re  
dyng / and rede and vnderstande thyne owne selfe / that  
thou mayst rede and loue god / that thou mayst fyght  
and ouercome the worlde / and all thyne enemyes / that  
thy labour may be turned in to rest / and thy sorowe in to  
Joye. And after the darknes of this lyfe / thou mayst se  
the springynge of the bryght moynyng. And after these

thou mayst se the myddaye and heyght of the sonne of  
ryghtwysnes / in whome thou shalt beholde the spouse  
with his spouses / one lord of euerlastyng glorie / that  
lyueth and reygnerh euermore. Amen.

**T**here we make an ende of this ryght profytable trea-  
tyse the *Medytacyons* of saynt Bernarde. Whiche for  
bery fauoure and charytable loue of all suche persones  
as haue not vnderstandyng in latyn / hath ben transla-  
ted out of latyn in to englyshe by a deuoute student of  
the vniuersite of Cambrydge / the whiche caused it first  
to be put in prynt. And now the secunde tyme enprynted  
at London / in flete strete / at the sygne of the Sonne /  
by Wynkyn de Worde. The yere of our lord god. 49.  
CCCC. reb. the. xix. daye of September.



